

My experience at the Middle School

SARA LORD
MIDDLE SCHOOL 8TH GRADER

There it stood, dark and foreboding, like the image of a prison on a movie screen. It was to be my evil cell for the next three years. The place where I would suffer through homework, teachers, and the perpetual issues that plague a teenager's life.

At least that's how the Middle School seemed to me at the time. I was a young child, fresh from my elementary years of smiling teachers and Valentine's Day parties. I didn't know what to expect and I had a secret fear that I wouldn't be able to handle the work or the peer pressure.

When I finally stepped into this building of imprisonment, I discovered that I need not be afraid. The halls were not dark as I had thought, but lit by streaks of sunlight shining through open windows and I detected a scent that smelled wonderfully like french fries. There were smiling principals and exuberant teachers, and all were willing to do their best to make us feel comfortable in our new school.

When the work actually began, I found it not boring, but interesting and exciting. I learned something new every day, whether it was about ancient civilizations or a new Robert Frost poem. I even dissected a frog for the first time and discovered what it truly meant to be part of a team on field day.

When seventh grade came, it was a challenge for me in more than one way. The work was more difficult as well as greater in quantity, and I found myself separated from one of my best friends for the first time since second grade. Yet that was also the year I will always remember.

I had the experience of being taught by three of the best teachers I have ever had, in academics as well as in life.

Now as an eighth grader, my eyes are looking as they did once before at my future in another school. I am not afraid this time, since I have learned from these past three years invaluable lessons that I will carry with me throughout my life. I was taught the significance of hard work, and that only an unyielding determination will earn me success.

I was taught the importance of great teachers and how much their advice can truly affect a person. Yet above that, I was taught the value of sincere friendship and the meaning in having someone who will stand by you. I learned more than just history or mathematics from my middle school experience. I was educated in life. When the time comes, these lessons are the ones I will most remember.



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Sara Lord and her pet spaniel, Chloe.

Middle School after school activities

LORRAINE DAVIS
MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

The last school bus has been called, parents have picked up their children and the walkers have left. The school day has finally come to an end. Now maybe I can get some calls in and finish some paperwork. As I walk down the main corridor, I hear voices coming from room 137. Looking into the classroom, I see students making different objects out of paper.

Origami at Shrewsbury Middle School? Yes, and it is all part of the After School Activities Program, ASAP.

Shrewsbury Middle School students are readily seeking learning opportunities outside of the regular school day. Some are tuning into their creative talents and learning how to make their own jewelry or creating elaborate scrapbooks. Budding actors are participating in drama (move over Matt Damon) and dancers are choreographing and dancing away in the Hip-Hop class (Jennifer Lopez, watch out!)

The ASAP has taken off to a good start! Both students and parents have enthusiastic reactions to the 2001-2002 ASAP.

Anne Rocheleau, an 8th grade student, attends Heather Gablaski's scrapbook club each week. She loves the opportunity to learn something new, while enjoying time with her friends.

Daniel Levine attends the Latin Club each week. He enjoys learning Latin games and participating in activities that otherwise may not be covered in class.

"Ms. Schmitt is even better after school!" Dan says about his Latin teacher.

Teachers have equally embraced



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Lindsey Favacchia, Trey Cullen and Chelsea D'Urso go over scripts in Mary Ann Smith's after-school drama club.

the program and welcomed the opportunity to share their personal interests with students.

Leslie Wortzman, an adjustment counselor by day and a jewelry-making teacher in the afternoon, is just one example of how talented faculty members at SMS are interacting with students after hours.

In addition to some of the previous offerings, the selection includes a twirling club, floral arrangements, kites and windchimes, paper crafts and a note taking and organization class.

If you have any questions about future programs, please call Lorraine Davis at 841-8672.

Parker Road preschool expansion

MARK T. MURRAY
CHAIRMAN, SCHOOL COMMITTEE
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Rising enrollment at the preschool level continues to apply pressure on one of the most important resources of the school district; classroom space. Like other school districts in the state, Shrewsbury's preschool enrollment has risen sharply in the last decade. As you can see from the table to the right our preschool enrollment has increased 122% since 1990.

To understand the phenomenon of the steep rise one must understand why such programs exist. Some think preschool programs are optional services that communities opt to provide. However, this is not the case.

Public school districts are required to provide educational services to special needs students when they turn age three. The State Department of Education requires that services provided in an "integrated" classroom to include "typically developing" children to serve as role models. Class size is capped at 15 students per classroom with no more than 7 special needs students in the class. Programmatically, it's best to have 10 typically developing and 5 special needs students in a class to best service all students' needs.

The School Committee and administration developed a propos-

al for a 5 classroom addition to the Parker Road facility (old North Shore School). While the request for funding was defeated at the February Town Meeting, there was widespread acknowledgement that we need to solve this space problem. Town Meeting asked for more options to be explored and to get the uncertainty of project reimbursement resolved. Since February several activities have been ongoing:

- The 5 classroom addition has undergone review from CTM Associates, a construction management company. The original cost estimate was validated.
- An 8 classroom addition project has been devised.
- An 8 classroom free-standing building with additional auxiliary spaces had been developed.
- The Town Manager and school administration met with the Department of Education (D.O.E.) to explore possibilities of such a project being "reimbursable" by the state.

After submitting a letter to the DOE requesting clarification on whether or not they would approve reimbursement for a free standing preschool project, we learned that although the DOE has reimbursed new elementary schools that have included preschool classroom wings, a free-standing preschool building would not qualify for state reimbursement.

While exercising due diligence and extensively reviewing each of

School Year	Enrollment
90-91	59
95-96	87
01-02	131
02-03 (projected)	180

* Enrollments are as of October 1st each year.

the four plans submitted to us by the architectural firm, Kang Associates, Inc., the school committee began to narrow its focus. Taking into consideration our preschool enrollment history and projection, the programmatic needs of the Preschool, the Parker Rd. site and its potential limitations, the costs associated with each plan and most importantly, the value we feel each plan represented to our community, the school committee arrived at consensus and voted unanimously at our April 24th meeting to support the five classroom addition.

The school committee understood that projecting preschool enrollments so far into the future is a very tentative and uncertain practice. However they felt reasonably confident that the original Scheme A plan (adding 5 new classrooms along with 3 existing classrooms) would satisfy our space needs for

Preschool, see page 6